

Regimental Command Sergeant Major

The theme for this issue—"The Chemical Corps: Expanding the Boundaries of the CBRN Battlefield"—is timely and relevant for every Dragon Soldier. It should be obvious that we, as a Corps of dedicated professionals, are expanding what we do and how we do it. Over the past few months, I have traveled extensively around the world to see Dragon Soldiers in action and to meet with our Army's leaders to discuss the things that affect every chemical Soldier in the field. I am convinced more than ever that we are moving in the right direction and are expanding our own boundaries. Here are some of the things that I have been involved in to ensure that the Chemical Corps stays on the cutting edge of emerging technology and in line with where the Army is heading.

Brigadier General Lillie and I attended the Joint Program Executive Office Quarterly Review in August 2005. During the seminar, we received information on new equipment to be fielded to the Corps in the future. We also visited Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to provide instruction at the Command Sergeants Major Designee Course and to brief the future of the Corps to the chemical officers attending the Command and General Staff College. I have been to the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth to assist personnel with revisions to the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (ANCOC) and Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (BNCOC). Recently, we completely reviewed and approved a new BNCOC program of instruction that ensures that our Dragon Soldiers receive training in skill sets that will provide them with the knowledge to advise their commanders well in the Global War on Terrorism.

In the past few months, we have seen two new chemical units activated. The Commandant and I went to Fort Hood, Texas, to witness the stand-up of the 31st Chemical Company (Biological Integrated Detection System [BIDS]) and then traveled to Fort Lewis, Washington, to observe the activation of the 110th Chemical Battalion. We also traveled to US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) headquarters to watch General Wallace assume command. During our visit, the Chemical Corps was highlighted as one of the leading Corps—training Soldiers to be better-prepared to fight on today's battlefield. In the career management field (CMF) review, we are looking stronger than ever. Over the next two to three years, the Corps will be authorized up to 7,200 Soldiers. These are exciting days for the Chemical Corps!

I have been working closely with the Commandant on the forthcoming restructuring of Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training in the 82d Chemical Battalion at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. The purpose of this TRADOC-mandated action is to get more NCOs into warfighting units in the field. Also, in December 2005, I had the privilege of presenting Sergeant Major Michael Croom, the Army G1 Sergeant Major, with the Honorable Order of the Dragon award during a ceremony at Fort Leonard Wood. He was nominated and approved due to his numerous contributions to the Chemical Corps, specifically in pushing the Automatic Promotion to Sergeant Policy through the Department of the Army. This policy has helped hundreds of 74D NCOs, working mostly one deep in combat arms units, get the promotions that they deserve in a timelier manner. For the first time in the history of the Corps, we are at 97 percent strength on skill level 20s.

The homeland defense missions, historically carried out by our reserve component units like Weapons of Mass Destruction–Civil Support Teams (WMD-CSTs), and the force protection missions of our units in overseas theaters are not going away any time soon. We must have Dragon Soldiers of all ranks up to speed to ensure that wherever they are sent, they are well trained and ready to accomplish the mission to standard. As a result, there have been several changes in and around the schoolhouse to ensure that our Soldiers are more prepared to operate and lead in today's technically driven environment. Students attending the Chemical Captain's Career Course and ANCOC now find themselves in a brand-new, sensitive-site exploitation (SSE) scenario at the Chemical Defense Training Facility. There is an active movement to incorporate this kind of training at the BNCOC level in the near future. We are also looking at expanding the courses in the NCO education system and Advanced Individual Training by providing basic



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Patrick Z. Alston**

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We’ve begun the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leader development and education, personnel, and facilities analysis required to effect this transformation. This issue also finds us at a key crossroad for Chemical Corps transformation. Not only are Army and chemical units in the field transforming, but the institutional Army is also transforming—and the Chemical School is no exception. At Fort Leonard Wood, the construction of the First Lieutenant Joseph Terry CBRN Responder Training Facility continues on schedule. This facility will not only provide world-class training for our Weapons of Mass Destruction–Civil Support Teams (WMD-CSTs), but will also provide the same level of training for Soldiers in Technical Escort units; Chemical Reconnaissance Detachments (Special Forces); and other units with missions to support civil authorities, perform WMD elimination, or conduct consequence management missions.

In our Chemical Defense Training Facility (CDTF), we are transforming from the standard M8 paper and M256 tasks that many of you remember. The CDTF is conducting advanced sensitive-site exploitation scenarios for the Captain’s Career Course and the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course. We will have the Officer Basic Courses and Basic Noncommissioned Officer Courses executing similar missions this summer. The goal is to have every CBRN Soldier train on sensitive-site exploitation and assessment in the CDTF.

My expectation is that every chemical Soldier will be a professional CBRN defense expert, unsurpassed tactically and technically, and imbued with the Warrior Ethos! Dragon Soldiers and leaders must be flexible enough to adapt to any situation, in any operational environment, in the presence or absence of CBRN hazards, and in or out of combat.

As a Corps, we have a lot to look forward to in the coming months and years. Chemical Corps transformation and these new initiatives present great opportunities for the Corps. I would like to make a special appeal to all Dragon Soldiers and everyone who supports the Corps mission to make the Chemical Corps Vision a reality as we move forward to meet the challenges of the future.

The Chemical Corps Vision

- An Army superbly equipped, trained, and ready to fight and win, unhindered by threatened or actual CBRN hazards.
- A Corps of professional Soldiers, tactically and technically unsurpassed, imbued with the warrior scientist/technician ethos.
- A capability, both vital and relevant, for the combatant commander, the joint warfight, and the defense of the homeland.

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hazardous-material training—in the classroom and with hands-on experience—to expose all chemical Soldiers to operational procedures and consequence management. This has been a long time coming!

The bottom line is this: All Dragon Soldiers need to take every opportunity to educate themselves and stay educated on new equipment being fielded and new doctrine being developed as we become more “purple” (Joint Service) in the way we do business. Just because you are in a smoke platoon or at a brigade headquarters now does not mean that you do not need to know about decontamination or biological detection. Keep driving forward. The greater the knowledge base, the better asset you will be to your commanders.